

You're Not Going Alone by [arcadesintheneighbourhood](#)

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Summary:

Max can't help but to worry about her family as they deal with racism.

TW: mentions of police brutality and racism

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Author's Note:

This was inspired by the Tumblr prompt "Get your fucking hands off of him" sent to me by partwayhappy!

When Rodney King is slapped by the sticks of four policemen, Max calls Lucas as soon as the news rings in her ears. She wants to hear his soft voice, to know he's okay, but even after she hangs up, the question of his safety haunts her. She sits with tightened muscles in the library, constantly blinking her tearful eyes to see her notes, but even with the shaking of her head and the little voice that repeats *Focus, Max, focus, Lucas is fine*, she can't get rid of the panic inside her. She heads back to her apartment to sleep her worries away, but it's no use- she still lies awake with her eyes open, itching to dial her boyfriend's number, but she refrains- she doesn't want to bring Lucas more worry than he already has.

When Trayvon Martin is shot in Florida a few days before her son's eighth birthday, she insists on picking up Aubrey and Jacob from school for the next two weeks. "Really? Are you sure you don't have to get work done?" Her husband asks, raising a speculative eyebrow. He knows that her work is too far for her to pick them up regularly, that she has to fight through thickets of traffic to get to their schools, (which she's good at, but still), but he doesn't ask any more questions after Max steadies her eyes on him and says,

"I'm sure."

She realizes just how much she loves her kids when they climb into her car in the pick-up zone and start yapping about their day. She really does love everything about them- she loves that they have Lucas' soft touch and sensibility and her penchant for teasing and their competitive streak. She loves they they have sweet brown eyes and skin somewhere between her and Lucas'. She loves that they have nicknames for each other just like she and Lucas do, that they call each other "Annoying Aubrey" and "Jaundiced Jacob". She takes them out for ice cream almost everyday for two weeks, and from then

on, she doesn't hold back on showing affection for her kids. She hugs and kisses them everyday, and even when they protest "MOM!" when their friends can see through their car windows from the sidewalk, she doesn't stop. She wants them to know how much she loves them, that she would do anything for them, that she would take away the injustice and cruelty for them if she could- and she really, really she wishes she could- because in the end, she knows the love she gives them won't be enough to compensate for the world of hate.

When the killings of Eric Garner and Michael Brown and Tamir Rice happen in 2014, the Mayfield-Sinclairs bring them up around the Thanksgiving table. Max tries to swallow her feelings while she chews on her green beans, but she can't help it- she pushes her chair away from the table and blurts out that she has to go to the bathroom. After she rushes to the door on the left, she lets herself cower to the sink, the tears slipping silently down her cheeks. It isn't fair, she thinks as her nails dig unconsciously into her palms. The family that adopted her into their own, the family that fed her pancakes and roast beef sandwiches and chicken parmesan, the family treated her more kindly than her own ever had, was in danger at all the time. And for what? Having different skin? Being the nicest people she'd ever met? They didn't deserve to have this shit thrust upon them- no one did, and the worst part was that she couldn't save them from it. She couldn't protect them. The world would keep on killing innocent, black people, people who had done nothing wrong, and everyone would just keep watching the news and and gasping in shock and drinking their morning coffee and moving on without a thought of it in their stupid, daily routine.

"Max, honey?" Mrs. Sinclair knocks on the door.

Max sighs. She guessed she couldn't hide in there forever. She unlatches the bathroom lock, and as soon as she steps out, she finds herself buried into her mother-in-law's arms. She's always loved hugs with Mrs. Sinclair- she was just as gentle and soft as Lucas was- and right now, she felt motherly and warm and wonderful, smelling of gravy and creamed corn and squash soup.

"I know it's been hard sweetie, but we need to stick through this together," Mrs. Sinclair comforts once she pulls away, one arm still slung over Max's shoulders. Her voice soothes her like the soft hum

her dad used to use to lull Max to sleep. “Now, come on, let’s get you some pie.”

Max wipes her eyes with the back of her hand and walks with Mrs. Sinclair back to the kitchen. She just needs to forget about it, she thinks as she takes plates of pie for herself and Lucas and the kids. Worrying won’t solve anything. She’d known that from the past thirty years, worrying got her nothing. Maybe if she forgets about worrying, she would feel a little better.

She tries to forget but it doesn’t happen.

When she and Lucas are on a date while Aubrey and Jacob are at home torturing the babysitter, she can’t help but fear as they walk through the park. She tightens her fingers around Lucas’ hand and silently warns, *Stay the fuck away from him*, as they pass the nearby police officers. She already has come up with an plan if they ever did hurt him- she would yell, “Get your fucking hands off of him!” and use her self-defense skills to jab them in the eye. She hates that has an action plan in case someone threatened her husband. She hates that it’s happened before, with her own stupid ex-stepbrother, and that she didn’t even try to push Billy off Lucas then.

“Are you okay?” Lucas asks when he notices her eyes dart around, vigilant for anyone who might hurt Lucas. Quickly, she seals up her worries and nods, not wanting to worry Lucas with her thoughts.

“Yeah, yeah, I’m fine,” She assures, but she gives her husband’s hand an extra squeeze as he leads them to rest on a park bench.

One night, she and Lucas are watching the news while the kids are upstairs in the computer room, competing for the highest score on their new Xbox game. When the screen turns to a Black Lives Matter protest, Lucas points to the scene.

“Hey, a protest is happening next Saturday in the city,” He says casually. “A buddy from work and I were thinking of going. Do you mind driving Aubrey and Jacob to robotics if we do?”

Max tries not to blow a fuse with her anger. She manages to contain it, get up, and answer,

“No.”

She walks to the kitchen to get a glass of water.

“No?” Lucas trails after her.

“I said, no, you’re not going to that protest,” She repeats impatiently. Did Lucas really think that he could put himself in danger like that and it would be okay with her? I mean yeah, they’d fought off interdimensional monsters and that asshole Billy and god knows what, but that was when they were kids. They were safe now and she wanted to keep them that way if she could control it, as safe as possible. And he was not going to go, especially when so many people were being killed lately.

“Max!” Lucas protests as Max reaches for a glass in the cabinet. She takes one out, slams it on the counter, and shouts,

“Don’t you get it Lucas? The police are targeting those rallies. You can get hurt at anytime. Do you think I want you getting hurt like that?” There are hot tears in her eyes now, uncontrollable ones, tears she’d somehow suppressed away since they’d known each other, but she couldn’t anymore. It had been thirty years of killings, thirty years of shootings, thirty years of worrying and worrying and Max couldn’t hide the fear any longer- the fear that one of these days it might be him, it might be Aubrey, it might be Jacob, or Erica or her in-laws. If she lost them like that and she was the one who let it happen, she would never forgive herself. She wouldn’t.

“Max,” Lucas says softly, and of course she softens to him like she always does. As he moves towards her and folds her into his arms, Max slides her hands up his back, pulling him closer and closer while she gathers bunches of his coat fabric in her hands.

“Stupid stalker,” She says, partly out of affection and partly to make them laugh, hoping her nickname could somehow cut through the thickness of their fears. Lucas chuckles and removes his head from her shoulder. He smooths the wild hair out of Max’s face and kisses her on the cheek.

“I know you’re worried about us being safe,” He acknowledges,

gently swinging her hands in his. “Believe me, I am too, but if we don’t fight back, they’ll always be coming after us.”

“You’re right,” She agrees, mulling Lucas’ words. If they didn’t help fight, they would always regret it. Max and Lucas were never one to stand on the sidelines, and they couldn’t start now, especially with something so important. Her family might be in danger but the least she could do was protect them- she could fight side by side with her husband, just like they always did. “I’ll ask my dad if he can take Aubrey and Jacob to robotics.”

“Your dad?” Lucas tilts his head curiously, not understanding what Max was up to.

Max lays her eyes fiercely on his and says,

“Because I’m coming, too,” She’s proud to hear the fire in her voice, and with it, the strength that could protect her family. “We’re fighting together.”

Author's Note:

I've had this idea for awhile and the prompt, combined with the inspiration from the Thanksgiving Master of None episode, really helped me develop and explore this idea. I've never seen a fic about Lucas and Max dealing with the challenges of race and an interracial relationship and I think it's a really interesting topic to write about. Please let me know what you think down below and please let me know if you liked/disliked the way I approached the subject!